

CHAMOIS HUNT IN THE ALPS.

By Léonard Léon. (Translated for the Sydney Morning Herald by Araminta.)
"Translators, in all sincerity, assure you that previous to my late chamois hunting expedition, I had some difficulty in persuading myself that any of these graceful wild goats of the Alps were still in existence. I was almost inclined to believe that the chamois was a half-fabulous, antediluvian animal, not now to be met with, save in a fossil state, the ideal of which was only kept in remembrance by means of those little figures, rudely carved out of white wood, such as your friends bring to you when they come back from Switzerland, with similar representations of the inevitable mountain cottage and statuettes of William Tell."

Nevertheless, when, in August last, I received an invitation to go to a chamois hunt, I must confess that I accepted it with a perfect thrill of joyous anticipation. Was it merely that I was delighted at the prospect of a change of scene, and was anxious to visit an unknown region, and plant my footstep amid the snows on Alpine heights? In the human heart there are measureless depths; and who can tell whether, in spite of my scepticism, I did not feel inspired by a secret hope that the chamois of my imagination might not prove to be something better than a solitary myth, an animal whose living posterity it was just possible that I might be fortunate enough to come across?

Two jolly fellows agreed to go with me, and off we started from the ancient city of Marseilles for the Alps, each of us carrying a goodly supply of bullets and deer-shot. I shall never, as long as I live, forget the sardonic smile that played over the lips of the gunsmith, whilst we were buying our ammunition. A Roman, terrified by that ill-omened grin, would have given over all thoughts of the expedition, but Marseilles sportsmen are plucky fellows, and it would have taken a great deal more than that to throw a damp upon our project.

The place to which we first directed our steps was St. Bonnet en Champsaur, a country town of some importance situated at one of the extremities of the Department of the Hautes-Alpes, nearly on the boundaries of the Department of the Isère. The village, built on the side of a little hill, can be seen at a considerable distance by the traveller, with its high-pitched roofs of thatch and slate. All around, it there is a magnificent expanse of verdure, meadow lands where lucerne and clover grow with an abundance that proves the productivity of the smiling country, where at well every step there you come upon a bubbling spring. These fresh-water streams fertilise the territory, and go to increase the volume of the Drac, a charming river, whose clear swift-flowing waters sweep onwards as far as Grenoble. People who are learned in such matters have declared that it is the richness of the soil in that portion of the Valley of the Drac distinguished as "St. Bonnet," which has earned for that particular spot its additional appellation of "Champ-sauve"—a corruption, as they think, of *Campus auri*—par excellence, a land of gold.

We were received with open arms by those young and earnest sportsmen Ernest and Albert J., both lawyers, or about to become members of the legal profession. They introduced us to one of their friends, Mr. G.—Municipal Councillor of the District of St. Bonnet, and General-in-Chief of the Fire Brigade of that locality—honourable functions which did not prevent him from being an intrepid Nimmerd. In spite of professional gravity, these gentlemen were destined to become to us the most agreeable brothers in arms that we could possibly desire; in fact, the pleasure that was afforded to us, by their company was by no means the least agreeable part of the expedition in which they so cordially agreed to co-operate.

Our new friends, as in duty bound, did the honours of the place, and entertained us with a full account of an historical personage, named François de Bonne, Duke of Lédisouire, Peer and Constable of France, who was born at this village, and who in the 16th century occupied a distinguished place in the annals of Provence. Of a humble origin, he early left the legal profession for the life of a soldier, and, after the death of the celebrated Montbrun, became chief of the Huguenots of the Dauphiné. His historical renown, however, rests principally upon his military success against Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, who, taking advantage of the Civil War in France, attempted to annex Provence and the Dauphiné to his patrimonial dukedom. Lédisouire was rewarded for his valour and patriotism by the title of a Maréchal and the honour of a dukedom; and when (towards the close of his life) he abjured Protestantism, he received from Dom Thiers, the great dignitary of Comte of France, being the last person who bore that distinguished office. They still show the house where the Duke first saw the light of day.

With due regard to our intended expedition, our two friends of the long robe were beginning to make themselves ready, when a difficulty occurred in the case of the one that was married. Her Ladyship the Judge of the Supreme Court of the Home Department peremptorily issued a writ *Nisi Exeat*, and stood upon her rights; on the other hand, however, it is only proper to state that the suit of the applicant was steadily, nay strenuously upheld. On our arrival at St. Bonnet some of our jokers adjourned to a cabaret, where abundant libations kept them merrily engaged until evening. When darkness came on they all once more returned, with a swaggering air, to the home of their friend, and explained what had been finally resolved upon. Friendly parties to the suit, however, had in the mean time interceded with the Court, and leave was granted accordingly. So, all things having been brought to an amicable conclusion, the termination of the legal difficulty was signed, sealed, and approved over some bottles of capital wine. The Court was fairly wearied out, and finally appeared to be well pleased to grant what it had at first very sternly refused. And thus "All was well."

I suppose you will think, my dear friend, that I am a long time on my way to the chamois hunt. But the fact is that we had arrived at St. Bonnet a day before the shooting season commenced; and as during the whole of that day all game was still under the protection of the law, I employed my time in setting down some of the details which I have just placed before you. It was, nevertheless, very trying to have to remain the whole of the day idle, without the pleasure of firing a single shot. Under these circumstances we thought it would not be a bad idea to fire at a target, so as to get our hands in with a view to our approaching expedition. A piece of board became, to us, for the nonce, a representation of the chamois, and we riddled it with bullets. Full of confidence in my address, I became convinced, that if these fantastic animals did really exist

I was well able to knock any one of them over that should venture within one hundred yards of my fowling-piece.

I must candidly admit that my incredulity

at the chamois had become considerably shaken by the yarns of my kind hosts, who gave us interesting details of their hunting expeditions during preceding years, affirming that they had never had come back from the heights without at least one chamois.

These stories inspired me with a violent longing to be off at once to the mountains where we were to meet with this splendid game. Our friends, however, insisted strongly upon the propriety of carrying on the war, during the first day of the shooting season, in the meadow lands around St. Bonnet—directing their best energies against the hares, grey partridges, and quails which are there to be found in abundance. In those parts neither red partridges nor the wild rabbits are to be met with, the climate being too cold for them. As for the quails they come there in the spring time to breed, but towards the midst of September they are off, for winter quarters to a more sunny region. We were very fortunate in our day's sport—three hares, twenty partridges, and about as many quail, found their way into our game bags. You probably know many Marseilles sportsmen who, during the whole course of their lives, have never even seen as much game as we killed on that day. But of what value would a few miserable hares or common partridges be to a set of people who would not be slow to sell the skin of the chamois they might chance to shoot, if they could but find a purchaser!

If in the faithful report which I am now addressing to my friends, I were to give a free course to my fancy, I should feel myself bound to state that during the night that preceded our departure I dreamt of large herds of chamois grazing mad, sans muids before us, and taking sights at us with uplifted forefeet in absolute defiance. But with the help of a little imagination, I could, I dare say, make a story which would not bore you much more than the inevitable dream which is to be found in all the classical tragedies. But as I am determined to become the embodiment of a really truth-telling sportsman—and slanderers have said that those two words are never to be found together—I shall content myself by informing you that I enjoyed during all that night that profound and unbroken repose which is the privilege of all who pass their days as sportsmen should. When I awoke my first thought was about those blessed chamois. I went hastily to the window to see what sort of weather it was. Alas! I saw only masses of grey cloud which the south wind was driving up, and which, as they hung threateningly overhead, seemed to forebode a long rain. Habitué as we are to the unalterable blue sky of our summers, we are liable to be much disconcerted in our excursions when they are accompanied by showers. Happily, we got off scot-free, with the mere fright of having to contend against such a drawback, and were enabled to start in very clear and beautiful weather.

After having bidden ourselves all the morning in cleaning our guns, and carefully replenishing our cartridge-boxes, we left St. Bonnet at 3 o'clock in the afternoon on our way to the mountains.

"We had to travel a distance of several miles before we could reach the spot where we were to pass the night. As a portion of the road is capable of being traversed by a vehicle, we went in a car to the village of La Motte. There the roadway became impassable for any kind of conveyance. We halted therefore and transferred our baggage to the back of a mule, led to us from a neighbouring farm, and were so prepared to continue our journey on foot.

The village of La Motte, where we made a halt, is situated at the entrance to a long and narrow valley, enclosed on both sides by precipitous ridges, rising to an immense height. These two ridges are two spurs from the huge uplifted sides of Mount Chaillo. A little stream, called the Sevreissette, has worn its way along the depths of this valley, where (though very clear and limpid) it becomes changed, when there is a heavy rainfall, into an impetuous torrent. The surface of the soil is everywhere covered with the gravel which this overflowing stream has brought down with it during its days of wrath. Whatever difficulty we found in making our way across these deep beds of gravel, we certainly could not think that there was much to grumble at; so beautiful did we find that valley. The mountains, which were grouped on the right and on the left like gigantic walls, presented an unbroken rampart; but the windings and projections of the lines of rock were constantly changing; every step that we took forward brought some new feature within the range of view. It was now twilight, and the shades of evening were falling over these huge, dark, masses, the silent angles of which did not stand out in that bold relief which is always to be observed in an open day. One might almost have imagined that the whole was one of those fantastic landscapes which have originated from the pencil of Gustave Doré. The solitude which the sound of our footsteps alone disturbed—the obscurity which veiled everything that was pass which seemed to be indefinitely prolonged—all produced in us a deep impression, the peculiar charm of which we all enjoyed in silence.

It was—black—night—by the time we got to Molines, the village at which we were to pass that night. A group of eight or ten habitations, of such a description that they might also be very well qualified as wretched huts, and a poor little church—that was the whole village. It is built at the extreme end of the valley we had passed through, and the mountains tower round it on every side. This fact alone explains the catastrophe which befel the place some years ago, when it was altogether buried under an avalanche of earth and gravel, swept down by a violent storm from the adjacent heights. To this very day the houses are half-buried under heaps of stones. The Government offered the people of Molines to transport them to Algeria, and there to build them dwellings and give them lands. But the love of their native soil spoke more strongly than their interest, and they refused.

Small as Molines is, it is, nevertheless, a village which has been raised to the dignity of a municipal incorporation, and it was at the house of the "Mayer" that we received the news of hospitality—a hospitality which, though kindly offered, was frugal enough. For you really can scarcely imagine to what a very simple diet these poor mountaineers are reduced by their poverty. By their unaided means they make with flour large cakes which they obtain a soup which forms (with the addition of a sort of white cheese) their principal sustenance. They drink nothing but water, and all the bread they have is nothing but big black loaves made of rye, such as are enough to frighten one. The festive repast "set before us" by the worthy Mayor of Molines was composed of that invincible *soupe à la chamois* and cheese,

which had judiciously brought bread with us from St. Bonnet, and our Amphitryon managed to unearth from some corner of his hut certain bottles of wine, which most assuredly were not Chambarin. But in this world everything is relative; and to find that wine exquisite we had only to say that (just then) we could not possibly drink better.

I must admit that the supper was a very joyous repast. Thanks to the wit, high spirits, and inexhaustible enthusiasm of our municipal councillor, we should have been, one and all, perfectly prepared to declare that that *agnou soupe* was something truly delicious. We had four peacocks to sup with us well acquainted with the country round about, who were to accompany us on the morrow in the capacity of trackers; with these men, half in French and very little else that is spoken in these secluded mountains, we eagerly discussed the plans of our forthcoming campaign, and its probabilities of success on the following day.

The frugal meal was prolonged until it grew very late, and when our trackers took themselves off for a few hours of repose, we began to think about taking some rest ourselves. We were a party of six, and the Mayor of Molines was good enough to give up to us two beds which stood at the end of our supper room; for in these cottages you must understand that one and the same apartment serves for kitchen, parlour, and bedroom.

To tell the truth, these beds were not very inviting to any of us, nevertheless, two of our friends made up their minds and resolved to give them a trial. Our chatty and amusing friend stretched himself at full length upon the floor, and, after several years' residence, was able to get up again.

He had resided ever since, cultivating a portion of it, and erecting upon it a small house. In September, 1864, the defendant purchased the property from the plaintiff for £100, and in the following April, 1865, purchased another ninety acres, making 210 acres in all. Upon this land he had resided ever since, cultivating a portion of it, and erecting upon it a small house. In September, 1864, the defendant purchased the property from the plaintiff for £100, and in the following April, 1865, purchased another ninety acres, making 210 acres in all. Upon this land he had resided ever since, cultivating a portion of it, and erecting upon it a small house. In September, 1864, the defendant purchased the property from the plaintiff for £100, and in the following April, 1865, purchased another ninety acres, making 210 acres in all. Upon this land he had resided ever since, cultivating a portion of it, and erecting upon it a small house. 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THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD, FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1868.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.
GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.
OPENING DAY OF THE EXTENSION TO
MOUNT VICTORIA.
MAY 1st, 1868.

Entrance tickets at a single fare for the double journey will be issued on the above date from all stations to Mount Victoria, available for the day of issue only.

JAMES BYRNES, Commissioner for Railways.

Department of Public Works, Railway Branch, Sydney, 27th April, 1868.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.
GREAT WESTERN LINE.

Merchandise will not be conveyed to Mount Victoria until arrangements are completed, of which due notice will be given.

JAMES BYRNES,

Commissioner for Railways.

Department of Public Works, Railway Branch, Sydney, 30th April, 1868.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS.
RAILWAY FROM SINGLETON TOWARDS
ARMIDALE.

PART 3.

NOTICE OF CONFIRMATION OF PLAN AND
BOOK OF REFERENCES.

With reference to the Notice of the Commissioner for Railways, dated 18th February last, relating to the taking of certain lands required for the making a Railway between SINGLETON and ARMIDALE particularly set forth in the Plan and Book of References thereto referred to:

Notice is hereby given that the objection to the lands proposed to be taken for the lands referred to in the road proposed to be adopted for the said Railway, the said Plan and Book of References have been duly confirmed by his Excellency the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, in accordance with the Act of Council 22 Victoria, No. 10.

JAMES BYRNES, Commissioner for Railways.

The seal of the Commissioner for Railways was affixed to Sydney, this thirtieth day of April, A.D. 1868, in the presence of R. Moony.

HOBSON and W H ITTING,
Glovers and Hatters,
By Special Appointment to His Royal Highness
THE DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH.

Josephine kid gloves, Jenvin's kid gloves.

Todd's twill overcoats and capes, perfectly waterproof.

Nagasaki umbrellas; scarfs, the newest kinds.

Fox fur mufflers, 42s, 50s, 60s the half dozen; for

case, elegance, and durability, they cannot be sur-

passed.

3, Hunter-street.

DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP.

IMPERATIVE SALE
of
£20,000

WORTH OF DRAPERY, TO CLOSE PARTNER-

SHIP ACCOUNTS.

GEORGE CHISHOLM AND CO.

are now
SELLING OFF

The whole of their valuable and well selected Stock of

Drapery, Ribbons, Gimp, Gimp, Gimp, Gimp, Gimp,

Shawls, Mantles, Ladies' Underclothing, Dresses, Woollens, Gentlemen's Mercery, Hosiery, Carpets, Orlie, &c.

at an
ENORMOUS SACRIFICE.

The prices of the goods are very greatly reduced, and in

order to facilitate business, every article has been marked in plain figures in Red Ink.

GEAT BARGAINS.

will be found in every department.

The date will be open each day at 10 o'clock, and close at 5 o'clock, and the SALE will be continued until the whole is

CLEARED OUT.

GE. C. and CO. having been in business for upwards of thirty years in Sydney, and further comment is un-

necessary, as their mode of doing business and the nature of their stock are so well known.

Ladies are requested to be early in their attendance.

GEORGE CHISHOLM AND CO.,

Next door to General Post Office.

DISSOLUTION OF PARTNERSHIP.

IMPERATIVE SALE
of
£20,000 WORTH OF LINEN DRAPERY,

TO CLOSE PARTNERSHIP ACCOUNTS.

NEW GOODS.

Ex Sir John Lawrence and Northampton, from London.

GEORGE CHISHOLM AND CO.,

390, George-street.

GEORGE CHISHOLM AND CO.,

50, George-street.

GEORGE CHISHOLM AND CO.,

390, George-street.

GEORGE CHISHOLM AND CO.,

Next to the General Post Office.

R AND W L C K R A C E S.

DAVID JONES AND CO. have imported for the

AUTUMN RACES a choice variety of

Gents' and Ladies' Hosiery, Ribbons, Gimp, Gimp, Gimp,

Waterproof OVERCOATS.

PRINCE ALFRED RIDING RIDING JACKETS, of tweed,

PRINCE ALFRED RIDING JACKETS, of tweed,

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